(a) whether it is a fact that ash produced by power projects is proving useful for increasing the production of crops;

(b) if so, whether any test has been conducted in this regard;

(c) the percentage increase in the productions of crops as a result thereof; and

(d) the total quantum of ash produced by the thermal power projects in the country, every year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI S.B.P.B.K. SATYANARAYANA RAO): (a) The preliminary studies carried out by Indian Council of Agriculture Research (ICAR) and the Department of Science and Technology (DST) on the use of fly ash in agriculture show that it has potential of being used for increasing crop production.

(b) and (c) The ICAR have conducted short term studies on crops, such as bajra, mustard, wheat, rice and groundnut where yield increase has been observed. The Department of Science & Technology, is also implementing a Mission Project on fly ash. Under this Project, with the use of fly ash, an average increase in crop yields of the order of 15-25% has been observed. Fly ash also contains toxic/heavy metals which may affect the soil health adversely in the long run. The results of long term studies under the Mission Project will, therefore, help in understanding the overall effect of fly ash on crop yields and soil productivity.

(d) The production of fly ash from the Thermal Power Stations in the country during 1998-99 was estimated to be around 80.0 million tonnes.

Adulteration in fertilizers

1265. PROF. M.M. AGARWAL: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received complaints regarding adulteration in fertilizers, insecticides and chemicals due to which production is declining every year;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to prevent this malpractice?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI S.B.P.B.K. SATYANARAYANA RAO): (a) to (c) No cases of large scale adulteration of fertilizers, insecticides and chemicals have been reported

to the Government. Crop yields are influenced by a large number of factors like input use, irrigation/rainfall, farm management practices and weather conditions etc.

The Fertilizer (Control) Order, 1985 provides that only such fertilizer which meets the quality standards as laid down in the Order is sold to the farmers. Similarly, the quality and sale of pesticides and insecticides are regulated under the provisions of the Insecticides Act, 1968. The State/UT Governments are the enforcement agencies and are adequately empowered to take appropriate action under the provisions of the Fertilizer (Control) Order, 1985 and Insecticide Act, 1968. The State Government have set up testing laboratories and also inspection agencies to check up the quality of these inputs from time to time.

New Agriculture Policy

1266. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's new agriculture policy has so far been formulated/approved by Union Cabinet;

(b) if so, what are its salient features and by when it is likely to be placed before Parliament;

(c) whether Government's new policy also aims at developing India's export potential in agriculture as well as forty per cent growth in farm output, by improving post harvest technology; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI S.B.P.B.K. SATYANARAYANA RAO): (a) to (d) National Agriculture Policy has been placed on the Table of Rajya Sabha on 28th July, 2000.

Financial Assistance Sought by Orissa

1267. SHRI ANANTA SETHI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the drainage problem in Orissa due to flood and heavy rain in coastal Orissa and particularly in Bhadrak and Balasore districts;